The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 30, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

Everything great is not always good, but all good things are great.—Demosthenes.

WHOLE NO. 1151 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1933 | FRANK MORRISON, Secretary | VOL. 23, NO. 8

Wage Rates at Muscle Shoals

The representatives of the American Federation of Labor were on the job to protect wage standards when the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives was drafting the bill setting up the Tennessee Valley Authority to administer the extensive projects coupled with Muscle Shoals properties.

Legislative representatives of the Federation persuaded the committee to include the following wage provisions in the measure:

"That all contracts to which the Authority is a party and which require the employment of laborers and mechanics in the construction, alteration, maintenance, and/or repair of buildings, dams, locks or other projects shall contain a provision that not less than the prevailing rate of wages for work of a similar nature prevailing in the vicinity shall be paid to such laborers or mechanics.

"In the event any dispute arises as to what are the prevailing rates of wages, the question shall be referred to the Secretary of Labor for determination, and his decision shall be final. In the determination of such prevailing rate or rates, due regard shall be given to those rates which have been secured through collective agreement by representatives of employers and employes.

"Where such work as is described in the two preceding paragraphs is done directly by the Authority the prevailing rate of wages shall be paid in the same manner as though such work had been let by contract."

These securities for labor were adopted by the House of Representatives and will undoubtedly be maintained for all of the Tennessee Valley projects in the final action of both the House and the Senate on the measure.

Government May Intervene in Coal Operators Demand for Wage Cut

Philadelphia, Pa.—The possibility of Federal intervention in the anthracite coal dispute, in which employers are seeking to compel the miners to accept a 35 per cent reduction in wages, is seen here. Belief in such a possibility was incited by the attendance of Hugh L. Kerwin, chief of the bureau of mediation and conciliation of the Department of Labor, at the proceedings of the Committee of Twelve—six company executives and six United Mine Workers representatives—who have resumed negotiations on the scale.

The demand of the employers for this drastic wage reduction was made last year and was the subject of extended arbitral proceedings before the Board of Reference, with Frank Morrison, secretary of the American Federation of Labor, representing the United Mine Workers and George Rublee, a Washington, D. C., attorney, representing the operators.

Mr. Morrison rejected Mr. Rublee's contention that the cut was warranted by an alleged reduction in miners' living costs and to enable the anthracite operators to meet competition of other fuels.

This decision threw the controversy back for settlement to conference between miners and operators and the Committee of Twelve was named to try for agreement, with the resulting present conference. Mr. Kerwin attended the session at the request of Miss Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, and afterwards conferred at some length with John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, and W. W. Inglis, head of the operator group. They said no offer of mediation was made.

The contention of operators that salvation of the industry depends on a reduction in the price of coal so as to increase demand is countered by the miners' argument that economies in management, transport and merchandising would provide the needed differential, and that these should be instituted instead of the workers being asked to take a wage cut, with consequent impairment of their living standards. The cost of anthracite production, they point out, averages less than $5 per ton, or little more than the average retail sales price in territory immediately contiguous to the Pennsylvania hard coal mining region.

Pinchot Asks Minimum Pay for Women, Pensions, Shorter Hours, Job Insurance

Harrisburg, Pa.—Immediate passage of a minimum wage law for women and minors and other advanced labor legislation and drastic action for unemployment relief has been demanded by Governor Pinchot in letters addressed to chairmen and important members of various committees of the Pennsylvania Legislature, in session here. He wrote, in part:

"I can no longer wait to remind you again, and forcefully, that the emergency which the Commonwealth now faces demands immediate and drastic action along two lines. First, the unemployed must be cared for. Second, there must also be a strong and concerted attack on the conditions which caused this depression and which, if allowed to continue, will cause depression after depression in the future.

"Drying up of the people's purchasing power brought on this depression. If it is ever to be ended and future depressions prevented the people's purchasing power must be restored and kept up. A permanent check must be put on the selfish practices of concentrated wealth which, in its greed for profits, has ruthlessly ignored the workers' welfare, to its own detriment and the suffering of millions."

Calling attention to a recent children's strike in Allentown which has focused attention on the atrocious conditions prevailing in many Pennsylvania factories, Governor Pinchot declares no State can afford to allow employers to pay 15-year-old girls as little as 30 cents wages per week, and urges action on certain workers' security bills now before the legislature, saying:

"The most important and most needed security measures are: (1) establishment of old age pensions; (2) a system of compulsory unemployment insurance; (3) a minimum wage for women and minors; (4) limitation of working hours; (5) more stringent prohibition of child labor, including ratification of the child labor amendment to the Federal Constitution."

He said that maximum hours go hand in hand with minimum wage legislation and asserted that the working day and week must be limited to help provide jobs for all and assist in reducing unemployment. He urged that the work of women and minors be limited to 44 hours per week and that full-time employment for minors be raised from 14 to 16 years.

N. Y. PRINTERS OPEN DRIVE FOR LOCAL TRADE

50,000 Union Men Join With Employers In Campaign to Keep Orders From Being Diverted to Other Cities.

New York.—Union printers have united here with employers in a campaign to induce local users of printing to place their orders exclusively with New York City shops, according to announcement by Frank N. Rodman, president of the Printers League section of the Employing Printers Association, on behalf of a joint committee of union and employer printers.

Mr. Rodman estimated that 50,000 union printers will cooperate in the campaign to improve business for plants here having $25,000,000 invested capital and paying annual wages of more than $15,000,000, with gross yearly sales totaling $40,000,000. The drive will coordinate work hitherto undertaken separately by the "Big Six" Typographical Union and the Printers League.

Supers and Choristers Strike Holds Up Opera in Baltimore

Baltimore, Md.—The curtain was nearly an hour late in rising on the performance of "La Tosca" by the French-Italian Opera Company at the Maryland Theater here when striking choristers and supers refused to go on until assured of their pay.

The house manager finally got things going by promising to hold all receipts until after the show and settle with the strikers even if the money had to come from the house percentage.

Even then the jinx wasn't satisfied, but turned intended tragedy to farce when a gilded chair collapsed and dumped the "wounded" villain on the stage to the accompaniment of gales of laughter from the audience.

Cloth Hat and Cap Workers Strike Against Low Wages

New York City.—Sweatshop conditions and inadequate wages have forced out on strike 1,500 members of the Cloth Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers Union employed in 225 shops here, according to announcement by Nathan Spector, manager of the union's joint board.

The strike followed a mass meeting presided over by Max Zaritsky, president of the union. Settlements will be made, it was stated, only with individual employers who are financially responsible or whose payment of wages agreed upon is guaranteed by jobbers or others who are financially responsible.

30-Hour Week in Klumac Mill Would Give Jobs to Many Idle

Salisbury, N. C.—The Klumac Cotton Mill here is working three shifts of eight hours each daily on a full time schedule for all machinery for the first time in two years. Even the rug mill has started up with 100 employes and with large orders reported on hand. The adoption of the 30-hour week in this plant would provide jobs for 25 per cent more workers.

Maine Woolen Mill Closes; 125 Workers Lose Their Jobs

Oxford, Me.—The Robinson Woolen Company mill here has been shut down for an indefinite period, throwing out of employment 125 workers for whom there seems to be no other source of livelihood in sight.

James W. Stanley, superintendent, said the shut-down was compelled by lack of orders, and that there would be no chance of reopening until sufficient orders for fall delivery had accumulated to assure resumption of profitable operation.

Seventy Employes Scrapped When Maine Silk Mill Closes

Westbrook, Me.—Seventy employes were thrown on the scrap heap when the Haskell plant here, Maine's only silk mill, closed down permanently after operating nearly 60 years.

The business was founded by James Haskell and has been owned ever since by the Haskell family. It at times employed as many as 140 workers, and the parents and grandparents of many of the workers who are now "ditched" after a lifetime in the mill were among the founder's first employes.

Fifty-Hour Week Applied By Hudson Motor Company

Detroit, Mich.—The Hudson Motor Car Company now is working its commercial car department six full days a week in order to speed samples and orders for its new half-ton units.

The regular schedule in other departments calls for five and one-half days of nine hours each for the week. Driveaways, some to far distant points, are being organized for dealers unexpectedly pressed for early deliveries.

With workers called on for an average of 50 hours weekly now, the adoption of the 30-hour week in the Hudson plants could provide jobs for two-thirds more workers than under the present system.

Organized Labor Demands Pay Raise To Meet Inflation, AFL Council Says

Price Increases Would Boost Cost of Living, Hit Workers' Buying Power, and Injure Unemployed—Mass Purchasing Ability Must Be Raised to Protect Living Standards of Working Men and Women.

Washington.—Organized labor's reply to Roosevelt's inflation policy was the declaration that it would inaugurate a fight for wage raises to offset the predicted increase in commodity prices.

This militant determination of organized labor was made clear by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, at its Spring meeting here, when it authorized William Green, president of the Federation, to announce that the council was "determined to safeguard the interests of wage earners by insisting upon increases in wages immediately."

Social Welfare Jeopardized

Mr. Green's statement follows:

"The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor is fully appreciative of the fact that the new policy of currency inflation just announced by the Administration is a matter of moment and of grave importance to Labor.

"In operation it will seriously affect the economic and social welfare of the masses of the people. An increase in the price of articles which enter into living costs is bound to follow the inauguration of currency inflation. In fact, the primary purpose of inflation is to elevate price levels and to increase commodity prices.

Labor's Buying Power Curtailed

"Obviously, Labor will be at a decided disadvantage if commodity prices increase and wages remain stationary at the depressed level to which they have been forced through the pursuit of a wage deflation policy.

"The buying power of the masses of the people has been greatly reduced through the imposition of reductions in wages. It has already reached the point where the workers are unable to buy either in quantity or in frequency.

"If prices are to be driven upward through currency inflation the very limited buying power of the masses of the people will be further curtailed.

"This is especially true because it is reasonable to conclude that the price of the necessities of life will increase under the inspiration and influence of currency inflation.

Cost of Living Mounts

"When there is added to this plan the further proposal to increase the price of agricultural products through the imposition of a tax to be collected by processors of farm products, which will add very greatly to an increase in the cost of living of the masses of the people, we have a full realization of the plight of Labor under the operation of currency inflation and the enactment of the agricultural bill.

"Labor realizes that an acute situation is being developed as a result of these economic, financial and legislative proposals. Government workers who are passing through a period of wage deflation and of increasing unemployment, through dismissals from the service and impending dismissals, have had no opportunity to readjust themselves to their changed financial and economic status.

Laboring Millions Are Injured

"The effect of these proposed changes upon the millions of part-time workers will be most injurious. Part-time work means part-time pay. They have already suffered a double reduction part of which is reflected in reduced wages and the other part in reduced working time. An increase in commodity prices will add very greatly to the economic and financial difficulties of this group of working men and women.

Suffering of Jobless Increased

"The millions who are unemployed will also be seriously affected.

"Unless the relief allowance now being made by relief agencies is increased proportionate with the increase in commodity prices the relief agencies will be compelled to substantially reduce and in many instances withhold the very small amount of relief now being distributed among those who are dependent and suffering. The problem of supplying relief to the millions who are in dire need has become one of the most serious problems facing our people."

Wage Increases Demanded

"As a matter of sound public policy, as well as of justice, an increase in wages should precede an increase in commodity prices.

"Unless this is done the consuming power of the people will be lowered rather than increased through the adoption of a policy of currency inflation.

"The members of the Executive Council are determined to safeguard the interests of the wage earners by insisting upon increases in wages immediately," the statement concluded.

"The deleterious effect of currency inflation upon the social and economic life of working people can only be offset through increases in wages and through an increase in mass purchasing power throughout the Nation.

"We propose to call upon Labor to begin the fight immediately for wage increases and to use such legitimate influence and power as may be at their command to bring about the restoration of the buying power of the masses of the people."

$45,000,000 FOR JOBLESS VOTED IN PENNSYLVANIA

State Will Ask Reconstruction Finance Corporation for $45,000,000, Making Relief Fund Total $90,000,000 for Year.

Harrisburg, Pa.—A compromise between administration leaders and representatives of the Republican machine is believed to assure $45,000,000 of State funds, which is expected to be matched by a similar amount from the Federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation, making a total of $90,000,000 for unemployment relief the coming year.

Of its share, the State proposes to raise $10,000,000 by a tax on beer, and $8,000,000 by a tax on interest bearing bank deposits. Economies in administration are expected to make $2,000,000 available. The balance is to be raised by two bond issues, of $20,000,000 and $5,000,000, respectively. It is estimated that more than 2,000,000 persons in Pennsylvania are in dire need of relief.

W. J. SPENCER, AFL OFFICIAL, DIES OF HEART DISEASE AT 67

Washington.—William J. Spencer, secretary-treasurer of the Building Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor for twenty-five years, died at his home at Wheaton, Md., near here on April 24 after several months illness, at the age of 67. He was a member of the Executive Council of the Building Trades Department for a number of years prior to his election to the position of secretary.

In addition, he was one of the organizers, and later general secretary of the United Association of Plumbers and Steam Fitters of the United States and Canada.

The funeral services in Washington were attended by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor and a large number of the representatives of national, international and local labor organizations.

The interment was at Lyndonville, N. Y. He is survived by one son, Louis B. Spencer, and one daughter, Mrs. William L. King, both of Washington, D. C.

CHILD STRIKERS WIN WAGE INCREASE IN ALLENTOWN

Allentown, Pa.—"Child strikers" who had picketed the plant of the Penn Allen Shirt Company for several weeks, won a 10 per cent pay increase and union recognition, after they carried their fight to Governor Pinchot at Harrisburg, and Mayor Fred Hart had named a "committee on sweatshops" to investigate conditions.

Between 40 and 50 youthful employes had been peacefully picketing the plant, complaining that their wages, mostly paid under "piece work rates," ranged only from $1 to $3 per week.

Unpaid Teachers Besiege Chicago Banks; "To Hell With Trouble Makers!"—Dawes

Chicago, Ill.—"To hell with trouble makers!"

This is what Charles G. Dawes, ex-general, ex-vice president, ex-ambassador to the Court of St. James, ex-chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, from which he borrowed nearly $100,000,000 to save his bank from blowing up last summer, told a delegation of teachers who invaded his sanctum sanctorum to plead that his hardly salvaged City National Bank and Trust Company buy Board of Education tax anticipation warrants to help pay them back salary amounting to $39,000,000.

It seems as though the doughty "Hell 'n M'ria" might at least have whacked up a part of that Federal "dole" he got with the needy teachers. But no, he consigns them to the blistering abode of his satanic majesty the Devil, and slams the door in their faces, closing his bank for an hour and a half in the busy part of the day.

Two other of the five big "loop" banks, the Harris Trust Company and the Northern Trust Company, closed their doors temporarily when 5,000 school teachers invaded the financial district seeking assistance, and police were stationed at the doors of others to maintain order. The police, whose pay also is in arrears, made little effort, however, to make the teachers move on.

About 200 teachers passed the guards at Melvin A. Traylor's First National Bank by showing pass books, and once inside pinned "unpaid teachers" badges on their coats and called for the "boss."

Mr. Traylor sent down word from the board room, upstairs, and a delegation of three went up and conferred with him nearly two hours.

He told the delegation they could prevent a complete breakdown of the local government only by getting behind the Chandler committee which is trying to sell tax warrants and obtain State legislation to speed up collections.

Retailers Charged With Not Passing On To Consumers Lower Rail Rates On Coal

New York City.—Executives of the railroads which on April 1 reduced by a maximum of $1 a ton rates on anthracite coal from the Pittsburgh-Buffalo line to Chicago and intermediate points, charge that retail dealers are not passing along to consumers the benefit of this cut.

The carrier heads say they had planned to follow this with a general cut in coal rates, but will not carry this plan through until they see some results from the first reduction. Retailers, they say, had promised to pass along their saving, and so speed up demand. Instead, it is claimed, they are hogging the profit and reducing rail revenues with no compensating benefit to anyone.

The situation is said to be affecting wage negotiations now in progress in Philadelphia between representatives of the United Mine Workers of America and the anthracite operators. Union officials have urged a reduction in rail rates as a vital element in decreasing the cost of marketing coal, but the carriers can see no advantage to either the mine workers, operators or consumers in lowering their rates if the dealers are to confiscate all the savings.

Gov. Olson Signs 54-Hour Bill for Women and Minors

St. Paul, Minn.—Governor Floyd B. Olson has signed the new 54-hour week bill designed to protect women workers in Minnesota industry. It supersedes four old bills which failed to remedy conditions under which women were compelled to work in restaurants and stores.

Labor unions and welfare organizations have fought for 12 years for such small protection for women workers as is provided by a nine-hour day, and it is hoped that the fact that some of the legislators advocated a 30-hour week, as proposed in the Federal Congress may presage something better to follow for Minnesota women workers.

Mayor Bright Blocks Pay Cut of Richmond Employes

Richmond, Va.—Mayor J. Fulmer Bright vetoed a further 15 per cent cut in the pay of city employes.

In a message accompanying the veto, Mayor Bright told the city council he hoped Richmond would lead the way to early restoration of salaries to both city employes and teachers, in the face of an almost certain increase in living costs to follow currency expansion.

Vegetable Gardens Provided For Unemployed of Ashland

Ashland, Pa.—Unemployed here are clamoring for the opportunity to raise their own foodstuffs this summer on vacant lots leased by the borough to be converted into garden plots.

According to Dr. J. L. Hoffman, president of the borough council and treasurer of the local Red Cross, 273 unemployed had applied for ground allotments even before the arrival of seed and fertilizer, which will be provided free at relief headquarters. He expected this number to be largely increased.

Building Workers Strike On Batavia Hospital Job

Batavia, N. Y.—Strikes occasioned by the failure of sub-contractors to pay their men have been the principal factor in delaying the completion of the United States Veterans Hospital, past due here, until June 1, or later.

The latest strike is by plasterers, who claim they are asked to accept less than the standard wage set by the Government. This is one of a series of strikes by various trades making the same complaint.

MISS PERKINS SUPPORTS FEDERAL 30-HOUR WEEK

Says Increased Employment Is Necessary for Business Recovery—Indorses Minimum Wage for All Workers.

Washington.—Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins vigorously defended her amendments to the Black 30-hour week bill in the hearings before the House Labor Committee, and declared that the Administration was in sympathy with the principles of shorter hours and the minimum wage.

The hearing was quite a gala occasion, for Mrs. Frank D[illegible] Roosevelt, intimate friend of Secretary Perkins, attended the hearing and had as her guests Miss Ishbel MacDonald, daughter of the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and Miss Mary M. Dewson of the National Consumers League. It was said this was the first time the wife of a President of the United States had attended a congressional hearing on a labor bill and given it her tacit approval.

Miss Perkins said the key to business recovery was increased purchasing power, and the 30-hour bill, by increasing employment, would increase the amount of goods in interstate commerce and thus increase buying power.

She recognized that a mere spreading of work, however, would not solve the problem of increased purchasing power. For this reason a provision had been placed in the bill for industrial boards which would fix wages for plants or industries where wages were below a fair and reasonable value of service or a reasonable standard of living.

Since the six-hour day bill was designed to apply to all labor, Secretary Perkins favored having the minimum wage provision also apply to all labor, so as to "put a bottom to the fall of wages."

In answer to questions, Miss Perkins said the six-hour day bill could be broadened to cover railroad employes as well as those in manufacturing industries.

N. Y. Typos Want Printers Included In 30-Hour Week

New York.—Typographical Union No. 6—"Big Six," as it is known to printers throughout the country, delegated the veteran Edward F. Cassidy to attend the House Labor Committee hearings in Washington and advocate the inclusion of periodical and newspaper workers among those to be covered by the Federal 30-hour work week bill.

The union holds there is no reason why the benefits of the bill should not be extended to newspaper and periodical workers, and Mr. Cassidy argued before the committee against the amendment to the Black bill which would exclude these printers from its operation. The exclusion amendment was sponsored by Senator Tydings of Maryland.

Jersey Governor Asks State Milk Board to Fix Prices

Trenton, N. J.—Governor Moore in a special message asked the legislature to hurry the creation of a State board to control the New Jersey milk industry, with an investment of $75,000,000 and an annual output of $22,000,000, imperiled, he says, by a price war and the passage recently of a price control measure in the neighbor State of New York.

Milk prices in New Jersey, Governor Moore says, have fallen below the cost of production, and he fears further declines will be caused by a flood of milk from other States.

ELECTRIC TAX SHIFTED TO POWER COMPANIES

Washington.—The iniquitous Smoot-Crisp tax penalizing consumers of electricity has been transferred to the power companies under a House amendment to the revenue bill renewing the Federal gasoline tax and lowering the postage rate on drop letters to 2 cents.

Friends of the power companies were caught napping by Representatives Whittington of Mississippi and Cochran of Missouri. Completely surprised, they rallied desperately and put up a stiff fight for the public utility interest, but were unable to stem the tide.

In the original revenue bill the House put the tax on the companies, but by an alleged Senate trick it was shifted to the consumers and so put through conference. Senator Reed Smoot of Utah and Representative Crisp of Georgia, who engineered the deal, now are numbered among the "lame ducks."

AFL Executive Council Approves Production Control Under 30-Hour Week; Minimum Wage Is Opposed

President William Green Tells House Labor Committee Pay Regulation Should Be Limited to Women and Minors—Fears Minimum Wage Would Become Maximum Wage—Labor's Right to Organize Must Be Protected and Wages Increased.

Washington.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, in session here, accepted the plan for Federal production control, favored by Secretary of Labor Perkins as an amendment to the Black-Connery six-hour day and five-day week bill, but opposed the amendment to establish a minimum wage for all workers affected by the measure. The Council believed that the pay restriction should be limited to women and minors.

The position of the Executive Council was presented to the House Labor Committee by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor. The council attended the hearing in a body.

Mr. Green declared the measure should apply to goods manufactured in foreign countries.

Right to Organize

He offered an amendment providing that under the law workers should not be denied by their employers the free exercise of their right to belong to bona fide labor organizations and the exercise of collective bargaining through representatives of their own choosing.

Mr. Green said that to be fully effective in restoring employment the 30-hour week bill should be applied to all industries and should be followed by legislation in the various States covering industries not included in the Federal measure.

He urged that the thirty-hour week should be linked to a plan for "government underwriting of production to increase productive activity and employment in the building, capital goods and consumer industries," with governmental loans restricted to payments for labor and materials.

6,000 Jobs, Higher Wages

He estimated the number of unemployed to be 13,000,000. He said the enactment of the 30-hour week bill would create jobs for around 6,000,000 and insisted that there should be no reduction in hourly rates of pay.

Flexible Work Week

While Mr. Green did not believe it would be necessary to make the bill more flexible by authorizing the 40-hour week for ten weeks providing the extension was deemed essential to certain industries by a competent government board, he said the American Federation of Labor would not object to the provision if the Administration and the Department of Labor insisted on such flexibility.

Controlled Production

On the amendment vesting in the Department of Labor the power to control production by limiting the total number of hours in certain plants if deemed necessary to correct over-production or unfair competition, Mr. Green said:

"We think that would prove a very interesting experiment, and we are willing to accept it in order to determine what the outcome would be."

Minimum Wage Held Dangerous

But in regard to the Perkins proposal that would authorize Federal wage boards to fix minimum pay, Mr Green said:

"The American Federation of Labor feels that would be a dangerous experiment. While it would help some, it would, in our opinion, tend to injure the efforts of the bulk of labor to raise their living standards, to bring about increases in wages and to help their social conditions through the exercise of their economic strength.

"We fear very much that if we embark upon a policy o ffixing wages by law, labor will find that the minimum wage so fixed will be the maximum wage, and that labor will be chained to a pegged price. I think we are justified in arriving at that conclusion because experience in commodity price fixing has worked out that very way.

Minimum Pay for Women and Minors

"We therefore look with disfavor upon the proposal to establish minimum wage boards, except that such boards shall be created for the purpose of fixing minimum rates for women and minors.

"We believe that they are so helpless, and that the turnover as a rule among that class is so great in industry, that society could with propriety protect them through the establishment of minimum wage rates.

Menace of Low-Wage Employers

Taking the mining and textile industries, as examples, Mr. Green said the Executive Council justly feared that low-wage employers in districts where the workers are unorganized and consequently helpless would be able to have wages fixed by the authority of the Government so low as to jeopardize the high wage standards established by the organized workers in the same industries in other localities—that the minimum rate in low-wage sections would in all probability become the maximum rate paid in that industry.

"We want to be free," he said, "to exercise our economic strength. We believe that we can develop a purchasing power if we are free to use that organized strength, to unite and organize."

Minimum Wage Employers Oppose Unions

With regard to employers who have advocated a minimum wage, Mr. Green declared:

"They are the employers who will not permit a union in their plants. The one stabilizing force that could develop a decent wage is prohibited. And yet they are willing to subscribe to a minimum wage. Why? Because they see that the minimum wage will be fixed at a level which they believe will be permanent and which will place every employer practically upon the same labor cost level. But if you would ask those employers to accord their workers the right to organize, they would immediately deny that right.

"We cannot organize the workers in some of the mills in the South because the employers discharge them immediately when they organize, they drive them out, they discriminate against them, they eject them from their homes, and they terrorize them. As a result, you cannot establish an organization under those circumstances.

Right to Organize Essential

"The one force necessary to maintain wages is the organization of workers into unions where they can exercise their economic strength. If the employers of the Nation will withdraw their opposition to organizaiton, if they will give the workers of America the right to organize—as they, employers, organize—if they may be permitted to freely exercise that right, we will build up a wage scale through organization that will be commensurate with the requirements of American citizenship.

"That is the opportunity we would like to have, and I wish that we might make it impossible for an employer to deny the workers the right to organize when they wish to organize. That, we think, is the solution of the question.

Risky Adventure

"I think you understand pretty well our position. We believe that this would be a risky adventure for labor, the fixing of wages by law through minimum wage boards, the pegging of labor at a price. We fear that it would be the maximum, that it would handicap us in our endeavors and in our efforts to build up wage scales; that while it might help a few down at the bottom, it would tend to drag down the many at the top.

"All we want is to be free—free to exercise our economic strength, to organize and to unite. We can protect our wages then."

A. F. of L. Executive Council Places Ban On Congress of Farmers and Workers

Washington.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, in session here, placed its disapproval on the "Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers," scheduled to convene in Washington the first week in May.

By direction of the Council, William Green, president of the Federation, sent the following letter to secretaries of the National and International Unions, State Federations of Labor, and City Central Bodies:

"The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor is now meeting in regular session at headquarters.

"We have received an invitation from the Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers for Economic Reconstruction to attend the meeting to be held in the Washington Auditorium, Washington, D. C., May 6-7, 1933.

"Taking into consideration the many inquiries which we at headquarters have received for information regarding this Congress and whether it was endorsed by the American Federation of Labor, it is reasonable to assume that National and International Unions, State Federations of Labor, and City Central Labor Unions have been likewise invited to send delegates to the Congress, May 6-7.

"Believing that you have been misinformed or misled as to the purport of this Congress, by authority of the Executive Council, this letter is being addressed to you to advise you officially:

"That the Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers for Economic Reconstruction has not been endorsed or approved by the American Federation of Labor;

"That it has no connection with the American Federation of Labor;

"That the American Federation of Labor will not be represented at this Congress;

"That we advise all National and International Unions, State Federations of Labor, City Central Labor Unions, and all organizations affiliated to the American Federation of Labor to refuse to send delegates to this Congress;

"That we earnestly request the National and International Unions to advise their local unions of the position of the American Federation of Labor and to direct them to decline to send delegates to the Congress."

3 Contractors Indicted for Violating Federal 8-Hour Law on Public Works

Baltimore, Md.—The first indictment ever returned in this district under the 40-year-old Federal statute forbidding contractors working employes more than eight hours a day on Government jobs has been returned by a grand jury in United States District Court against the general contractor, his superintendent and a sub-contractor on the recently completed Cumberland Post Office.

John Campbell Grant, trading as John Grant & Son, Cleveland, Ohio; John F. Fraser, the superintendent, and Sherman J. Hasbrouck, sub-contractor, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, face trial on 26 counts. Hours worked varied between nine and one-half and thirteen daily, it is charged. William H. Talkin, assistant district attorney, and Simon E. Sobeloff, Federal prosecutor, presented the case to the grand jury.

Willys-Overland Employes Paid 20 Per Cent of Wages

Toledo, Ohio.—By order of the Federal court and at the suggestion of L. A. Miller, receiver for the Willys-Overland Co., bankrupt automobile manufacturing concern, a 20 per cent payment, aggregating about $60,000, was made to employes of the plant on wages due for the two weeks ending Feb. 15.

Lehigh Valley Silk Mill Employes Get Wage Boost

Bethlehem, Pa.—A 10 per cent wage increase was given employes of the Warren plant of the Lehigh Valley Silk Mills in the adjoining borough of Fountain Hill, effective immediately, according to announcement by T. F. N. Gray, general superintendent.